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RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIO DE JANEIRO 000365

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SUBJECT: RIO WEIGHS OPTIONS FOR NEXT FAVELA PACIFICATION

REF: RIO DE JANEIRO 329; RIO DE JANEIRO 346; RIO DE JANEIRO 353

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CLASSIFIED BY: Dennis W. Hearne, Principal Officer; REASON: 1.4(B),
(D)

SUMMARY

¶11. (C) On October 29, the Superintendent for Operational Planning from Rio's State Security Secretariat said Rio Governor Sergio Cabral would decide by the end of November whether to "pacify" five less populated, lower-threat favela communities or focus on one largely populated, higher-threat favela by the end of the year. According to Alzir, the Favela Pacification Program's strategic plan envisions the pacification of 131 favela communities over the next five years, and would do so by increasing Pacification Police Unit (UPP) personnel from 500 to 12,000. Alzir stated increasing police recruitment was critical to making the five year horizon viable, and said Rio state would be seeking federal funding to increase police salaries. End Summary.

RIO AUTHORITIES WEIGH OPTIONS FOR NEXT FAVELA PACIFICATION

¶12. (C) Rio state and police authorities will decide the next target(s) for the Favela Pacification Program (FPP) in the coming weeks. During an October 29 meeting with consulate officers to lay out the FPP strategy and time-line, Roberto Alzir, Superintendent for Operational Planning from Rio's State Security Secretariat, said Rio de Janeiro Governor Sergio Cabral would decide by the end of the November whether to "pacify" five less populated, lower-threat favela communities or focus on one largely populated, higher-threat favela by the end of the year. Four other favelas with some 90,000 residents are currently pacified, i.e. mostly free of gang activity and with the population accessible for city services and social assistance (Note: As reported in reftel A, the "pacification" of a favela community involves state police special operations units (BOPE) first entering a favela by force. Once criminal elements that control a favela are purged, state-administered Pacification Police Unit (UPP) officers then replace traditional police forces, in order to maintain order, foster long-term ties between the state and the community, and assist with the delivery of basic services to the favela. End Note.)

RIO'S FAVELAS PACIFIED IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

¶3. (C) FPP objectives encompass over 100 favela communities, using 12,000 UPP officers, within a target time horizon of five years. According to Alzir, the FPP strategic plan envisions the pacification of 131 favela communities, with a total affected population of approximately 780,000 residents - including the key, drug gang-controlled favelas Complexo de Alemao, Rocinha, and Complexo de Mare. He said this goal would normally take 13-15 years to achieve, but the Rio government sought to accomplish the objective within five years. In order to do so, security officials plan to increase the number of UPP officers - the centerpiece of the FPP strategy - to 12,000, as well as increase overall Military Police (MP) numbers to 55,000 by 2016. (Note: UPP ranks currently number only 500 officers, of a total of 36,000 MP men and women. End Note).

¶4. (C) Alzir stated increasing police recruitment was critical to making the five year horizon viable, and said Rio state would be seeking federal funding to increase police salaries (Note: Standard MP officer monthly salary is approximately 1,000 Brazilian Reals, or 600 USD. UPP officers earn an additional 500 Brazilian Reals, or 300 USD, paid for by the Rio municipal government. End Note.) Stating, "The state does not have enough money," Alzir explained the Rio state government was asking for federal assistance to cover the increase (amount unspecified) until 2016, when the state would assume the additional amount.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

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¶5. (C) In selecting favelas for pacification, state and police authorities weigh location, strategic impact, tactical terrain, and resource requirements, with final approval coming from the Governor. Showing consulate officers a satellite image of a pacified favela's radius of gunfire reach, extending well into Rio's famed Copacabana neighborhood and beach area, Alzir explained the FPP's goal was to prioritize favelas adjacent to concentrated tourist areas. In selecting favelas for pacification, security officials first gather intelligence to develop a comprehensive profile for each community, crafting tactical maps that show primary access and escape routes, known drug gang hideouts and strongholds, and key civilian points, such as schools and churches. Authorities also weigh the strategic impact of a pacification. They analyze this information against manpower and resources available, and draw up a list of suitable target favelas. The Governor, with recommendations from the MP Police Chief and State Secretary for Security, then selects the community.

¶6. (C) Alzir explained his biggest concern about the FPP was losing progress due to change of governments. "We need the next state government to pursue this, to continue with this commitment," That said, Alzir expressed optimism that Rio's hosting of the 2016 Olympics will make state, local, and federal authorities "move forward, faster" on favela pacification.

COMMENT

¶7. (SBU) While Alzir did not specifically name the Complexo de Alemao - controlled by the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) drug faction - as the large, high-threat candidate for pacification by year's end, it is likely the principal stronghold Rio authorities have their sights on. Rio State Secretary for Security Jose Mariano Beltrame told Principal Officer on September 22 this favela was the "epicenter of the fight," and stated a pacification operation would take place there in early 2010 (reftel A). On October 17, Comando Vermelho gunmen shot down a police helicopter, killing four officers (reftel B), and, in retaliation, MP tactical

raids since targeted 14 Comando Vermelho-controlled favelas. Given that any police operation into Complexo de Alemao would be "traumatic" in terms of scale of violence, however, it is unlikely that the Rio security apparatus would be prepared to launch an operation into Complexo de Alemao before the December holidays and February Carnival festivities.

18. (SBU) Whether Rio's next step involves a high-profile operation in Complexo de Alemao or the pacification of smaller, easier-to-secure favelas, we anticipate continued unintended consequences, such as those reported in reftel C. In yet another example of such consequences, a neighborhood association from the affluent Leme neighborhood recently met with State Security Secretary Beltrame to complain about the expansion of the Babilonia-Chapeu Mangueira favela - one of Rio's four pacified favela communities - that borders Leme. According to the neighborhood association, the new-found stability in this favela is attracting squatters from other areas, resulting in a flurry of hastily - and illegally - constructed new abodes and rising crime rates in the neighborhood. We will continue to monitor and report on such developments, as well as how ongoing FPP operations bear on Rio's overall security, commercial, and social environment. End Comment.